Application No.: 09/745,386
Filing Date: December 21, 2000

3. The holder of claim 1, the holder further including a rigid structure that abuts the annular sewing ring at the inflow end of the valve, the lengths of flexible material each axially extending in second segments along two adjacent commissure posts and attaching to the rigid structure at two points such that each length may be severed close to one of its points of attachment to the rigid structure and pulled free of the valve along with the rigid structure by virtue of its remaining attachment point.

4. The holder of claim 3, wherein the rigid structure includes a mechanism for pulling the second segments toward the rigid structure causing the first segments to shorten and the commissure posts to flex inward toward each other.

5. The holder of claim 1, wherein the first segment of each length of flexible material comprises a band that is substantially wider than it is thick.

6. The holder of claim 5, the holder further including a rigid structure that abuts the annular sewing ring at the inflow end of the valve, the three lengths of flexible material each axially extending in second segments along two adjacent commissure posts and attaching to the rigid structure at two points such that each length may be severed close to one of its points of attachment to the rigid structure and pulled free of the valve along with the rigid structure by virtue of its remaining attachment point.

7. The holder of claim 6, wherein the commissure posts are cloth covered, and wherein the second segments pass beneath the cloth covering of the respective commissure posts, the second segments having a configuration that is not as wide as the first segments.

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24. (NEW) The holder of claim 1, wherein the lengths of flexible material each axially extending in second segments along two adjacent commissure posts and attach to a structure that abuts the annular sewing ring at the inflow end of the valve, wherein the second

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